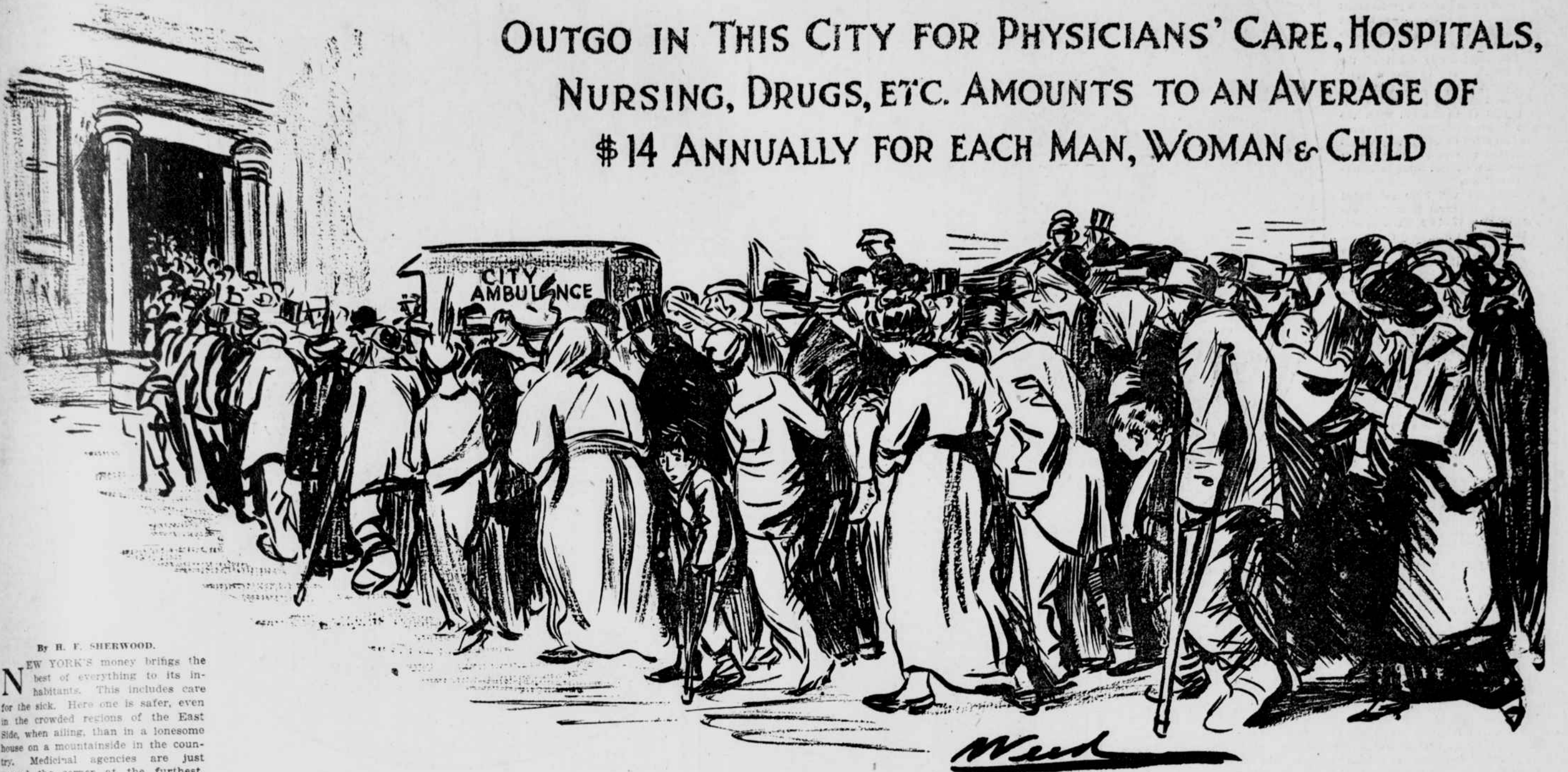




# PA KNICK'S HEALTH BILL \$80,000,000 YEARLY

## OUTGO IN THIS CITY FOR PHYSICIANS' CARE, HOSPITALS, NURSING, DRUGS, ETC. AMOUNTS TO AN AVERAGE OF \$14 ANNUALLY FOR EACH MAN, WOMAN & CHILD



By H. F. SHERWOOD.

NEW YORK'S money brings the best of everything to its inhabitants. This includes care for the sick. Here one is safer, even in the crowded regions of the East Side, when ailing, than in a lonesome house on a mountainside in the country. Medicinal agencies are just around the corner at the furthest, while it may require days to bring a physician or a surgeon to the mountain home with its ozone-laden atmosphere.

New York City, if the mortality tables are a proper basis for judgment, is one of the healthiest cities in the world. It has money to spend on health and it spends it with a lavish hand. It gets results with as much certainty as Gorgas did in Havana and Panama. The death rate is going down each year. It is below the rate for the rest of the State and lower even than in the rural sections where health is supposed to make its abode. Indeed, it is the low rate of New York City that brings below fifteen in a thousand the rate for the whole State. The city's rate in 1913 was only 13.7. Elsewhere it was 16.1, the rural rate being 15.4, and both of these figures were higher than in 1912, while New York City's was lower.

While, of course, it is impossible to figure exactly the amount that the people of this city expend for the sake of sound bodies, from ascertainable figures it is at least \$78,521,000 a year, or about \$14 for each man, woman and child living within its walls.

The system by means of which the

efforts to supply health for the sick, has gone a step further and sought to furnish in addition substitutes for the health giving qualities of the country. It must be admitted that as a preventive of illness and as an aid in convalescence, country air has something in its favor. So Father Knickerbocker has not been satisfied with hospitals for the sick, but has undertaken to keep the well in good health and help the convalescent on their way back into that much desired state. Not only is health considered from the physical point of view but also from the social angle.

### LEADERS AGAINST THE POWERS OF DISEASE.

In the forefront of the battle against the powers of disease and the pain with which they torture mankind stand the physicians and surgeons. They are the captains that order the fight, discover the vulnerable points, map out the campaigns and lead the forces on to the battle ground. Of this group there are in New York City approximately 7,800. Considering their value to mankind and their place in the conflict,

erously of their professional skill and knowledge where adequate compensation cannot be obtained than do the members of any other profession. They give through the 112 hospitals and the equal number of dispensaries scattered through the length and breadth of the city between Tottenville and Wakefield and the Hudson River and Springfield, Long Island. They constitute one of the channels through which Father Knickerbocker distributes his money in exchange for health, and despite the jokes about the co-operation of the doctor and the undertaker there is little doubt that here he gets more for his money in respect to health than through any avenue except, perhaps, the nurses.

### NURSES—THE SUPPLEMENTARY PHYSICIANS.

The nurses are literally supplementary physicians. The nurses know that they may be called upon to do almost any service that will aid in comforting stricken humanity. Upon them more than upon any other group rest the successes of the three kinds of health work which have been developed in New York City. They go into the tenement homes to give prospective mothers advice in order that the newcomers into this vale of tears may have a fair start, with a chance of turning some of the tears into laughs. As soon as they learn of the arrival of the child, provided they were not present, they repair to the home of its parents and give assistance and instruction in his care. They follow him through infancy and school life until he secures his working papers and leaves to engage in the daily strife for a livelihood. From that time on they meet the wageworker in the dispensary or the hospital, or the sanatorium, and, in time of stress, in the home, and they follow him through the convalescent period back to health again.

No one knows how many nurses there are in New York City, but at least 5,000 are a record in the different services. In addition there are transient nurses. These are nurses who have come to New York to try their luck. As they are not graduates of a New York hospital, or able to meet the high requirements of the organization of registered nurses, they are unrecorded and out of the public ken.

### PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

It is very difficult to estimate what New York pays for its nurses, as between 2,500 and 3,000 of them are in hospitals where part of the bill is hidden in the maintenance charges. There are about 1,000 performing what is called private duty. This means the private practice of their profession. They are in great demand and are practically in constant service, receiving from \$25 to \$35 a week. Their total income in the course of a year approximates \$1,500,000.

There are two other branches of service in which many nurses are engaged. One is municipal and the other social service. There are 767 nurses on the staff of the Department of Health, one half of them being employed in the Bureau of Child Hygiene, which was organized August 10, 1908. Their pay is \$900 a year. The field of the Bureau of Child Hygiene is the child from prenatal days to the time of entering some form of employment. Its work illustrates how money conserves health. As soon as a birth record is received from one of the hun-

dreeds of midwives in New York City, a nurse immediately seeks out the home of the parents and offers assistance and instruction in the care of the child. It is stated that there were 1,200 fewer deaths of infants under one year in the course of the first year after this service was organized than in the course of the previous year.

### WORK OF NURSES IN BUREAU OF CHILD HYGIENE.

The nurses of this bureau also assist the school physicians and visit the homes of the children for whom some form of treatment has been prescribed. The value of this kind of work is apparent from the summary of some of the results made by Dr. Baker, director of the bureau.

"The first school nurse in the United States," she said, recently, "was appointed in New York City in 1902. Her value in school treatment of these children, with the consequent lessening of the number of exclusions and decrease in loss of school time was demonstrated at once. Since then the field of the school nurse has broadened immensely, but her usefulness in this branch of work is as great as ever. In 1903, when there were only eight or ten nurses employed, 57,655 children were excluded from school for contagious eye and skin diseases; in 1912 only 4,716 children were excluded for this cause. Not only have the exclusions decreased, but with the exception of pediculosis, every type of these diseases shows a marked reduction in cases occurring. In 1903 trachoma was found in 20 per cent of the children; in 1912 it was found in only 3 per cent."

"The gain in school attendance alone," according to Dr. Baker, "has more than paid for this part of the system of school inspection."

### EMPLOYED IN THE BUREAU OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ARE 218 NURSES, AND IN THE BUREAU OF HOSPITALS THERE ARE 187. OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET OF \$3,400,000, MORE THAN \$700,000 GOES IN SALARIES TO THE NURSES.

### SOCIAL WELFARE WORK FOR NURSES.

In social welfare work outside the Department of Health there are about 425 nurses, with salaries which average \$900 a year. They are found in factories, department stores, the social departments of church work, settlements, clinics, charity organizations, hotels and the tuberculosis clinics. In the Henry Street Settlement, under the direction of Miss Lillian D. Wald, there are 96 nurses. This settlement receives a large sum from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for furnishing a free nursing service to holders of its industrial policies. Social welfare work for nurses, which is free from the annoyance of official work and the slavery of private nursing, is attracting a particularly high class of women into its field, including women possessing college diplomas. At Teachers College there graduates each year as trained nurses a class of forty or fifty women. This is the only post-graduate nurses' school in the world. Father Knickerbocker, in his private capacity, spends about \$300,000 annually for the fine social service of this group of women.

It is not strange that hospitals should play an important part in the life of a city, so many of whose inhabitants live in small apartments. There are 112 of these of a sufficiently public and general character to be included in the statistics of the United States census.

In the course of a year they are called upon to serve about 275,000 patients, at a maintenance cost of approximately \$10,000,000. Within their doors are found the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich, for the hospitals are equipped to provide everything that the sick can need and to eliminate the inconveniences connected with the care of the sick at home. Many thousands of New York's children would be led to a hospital if they asked to have an opportunity to see the building in which they were born. There are hospitals for care of babies, for the crippled, for the cancerous, and for the tuberculous, for those having trouble with their skin, eyes, nose, ears, throat, or suffering from some nervous ailment. Of course, any one injured in the streets or elsewhere will find shelter and care, for in every part of the city are hospitals equipped with ambulances and operating rooms for the assistance of those whose misfortune it is to require it while going about their business and far from home.

free medical and surgical service averages more than a million a year, some dispensaries averaging from 75,000 to 125,000. In addition to the sums paid out by the hospitals for the expenses of out-patient departments, and included in the figures already given, about \$250,000 is expended in a year in the maintenance of New York's dispensaries. No one can say that there is not a Pool of Bethesda at the service of the inhabitants of New York City.

### THE HANDMAID OF THE DOCTOR IS MEDICINE.

The handmaid of the doctor is medicine. There are a great many persons who think they can get along with the handmaid without the doctor. There are approximately four thousand drug stores in greater New York, and it has been estimated that the volume of their business in the course of a year is \$31,300,000. This probably includes soda water, but even so the amount expended for health giving powders and liquids is a large one. Apparently

than any of the other purveyors of health, with the exception of the druggist. It is estimated that there are four thousand dentists, and that their annual business foots \$20,000,000. This accounts for nearly \$4 out of the \$14.

The men who make a specialty of the care of the eyes, and who manufacture eyeglasses feel the same way about the public. Women, almost blind, they assert, will spend \$40 for a hat when they would not think of paying an optometrist \$5 to learn whether their eyes needed attention or not. The oculists and opticians share \$2,000,000 equally, it having been figured out that in each family there is an annual expenditure of at least \$1 for new glasses, in addition to occasional examinations of the eyes.

### IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL EXACT SIZE OF BILL.

It is impossible to tell exactly how much Father Knickerbocker in his public and private capacity spends in the battle for health, but the expenditures are low when the victories are



"IT'S WORTH THE MONEY."



"HE BEGINS WITH THE CRADLE."

stream of health is brought to the door of every person, regardless of his wealth or his poverty, is as intricate as the nervous system of the human body. One could spend weeks in the effort to trace out all the revivifying channels by which the great collective body is kept in health. Even then one could not be sure that all the filaments had been dissected, for the system has many ganglia—the spontaneous attempts of the people of a neighborhood to meet their needs, some of which are so rudimentary that they have hardly reached the stage of record.

The good father of the city, in his

their rewards (outside of those gained from the knowledge that a good piece of work has been done and suffering relieved) are hardly commensurate. While a few have incomes ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year, it is asserted that most of them do little better than earn a living. There are no millionaires among them whose fortunes grew out of the practice of their profession. Low as it may seem, it is stated by persons in a position to know something of the facts that the average earnings of the physicians of New York are little above \$1,000 a year. They probably give more gen-

In the effort to meet the needs of the ailing who are not sick enough to go to a hospital or suffering from a serious injury, the dispensary has been established. There are approximately as many of these as there are hospitals, and usually, although not always, they are adjuncts of those institutions. The doctors credit in part their comparatively small earnings to the wide distribution of the dispensary. The number of visits made to these centres of

more is paid for drugs than for any other single item in the list of health producing agencies.

"Without teeth you die," is the dentist's little joke. Although he is constantly complaining of the parsimony of the public where the welfare of the teeth is concerned, spending money only for the extraction of molars when it should indulge in preventive and protective work, apparently he turns over more money in New York City

counted. Smiles and prosperity follow in their train. In their absence clouds darken the horizon and the world drags. Many times those who seek health pray for the coming of death as the alternative. More and more in every part of the country the value of the protection of health is being realized, and each year greater sums of money are being expended for the reduction of sickness and the prolongation of life.